

LETTER

The European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy



March 10, 2007

It is certain that over the past ten years the *Journal of the Scottish Association of Chaplains in Healthcare (SACH)* has provided chaplains throughout Europe and beyond with a high quality resource through the publication of the Scottish Journal of Healthcare Chaplaincy. The Journal has proven to be an expression of the conscientious work of all those in the field of spiritual health care in Scotland while, at the same time, offering its readers the opportunity to become aware of chaplaincy work throughout the world.

Within the past decade, the positive change of health care chaplaincy is that it has come out of isolation and has joined forces with other areas of health care. Ten years ago, chaplaincy organizations of Europe were very much isolated from one another. Now, they are united in the European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy. Ten years ago, chaplaincy was detached from the happenings of the Commission of the EU. Now, we have been heard as a major health care provider. Ten years ago, the chaplains of Europe were not able to easily share views concerning pastoral care of fellow chaplains from other European countries. Now, these views are more accessible. The Scottish Journal of Healthcare Chaplaincy has not only contributed to these changes, but it has been a forerunner in allowing these changes to take place.

There are many future challenges which are consistent with the changes fore mentioned. There is a greater need to allow sharing and cooperation on all levels of health care. There is a need to provide empirical information concerning spiritual health

care so as to qualify our work. There is also a need to further develop our skills and our care in order to face the growing demands and perplexities of those who we minister. Perhaps, this is the greatest challenge of all: to face these perplexities with an open mind, a loving heart and a deep personal empathy, counterbalancing the impersonal secular institutionalization of our times.

In expressing all those who participate in the *European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy*, allow me to congratulate the SACH for its work and to express thanks for the Scottish Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy, knowing that it will continue to be a tool in shaping spiritual health care throughout Europe and the entire world.

Sincerely,

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